

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: Urban Design Committee

DATE, TIME AND

PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, March 5, 2003, 3:00 p.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 2nd Floor, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Members: Dennis Scheer (arrived at 3:50 p.m.), Gordon Scholz (departed at 4:17 p.m.), Michael Eckert, JoAnne Kissel, Third World Oforah, and Scott Sullivan. Kim Todd absent.

Others: Dallas McGee (Urban Development); Scott Cockrill and Virendra Singh (Engineering Services); Lynn Johnson (Parks & Recreation); Dale Vagts, Mike Malone, Steve Garbe, Gayle Gerkensmeyer (Olsson Associates); Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

STATED PURPOSE

OF THE MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Urban Design Committee

In Mr. Scheer's absence, Mr. Scholz called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

Approval of meeting notes, February 5, 2003

Ms. Kissel moved to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2003 meeting, seconded by Mr. Eckert.

Motion for approval carried 5-0. Scholz, Eckert, Kissel, Oforah, and Sullivan voting 'yes'. Scheer and Todd absent.

Update on Downtown Entertainment Center project and UDC role in design reviews

Dallas McGee stated that Douglas Theater Company has submitted a proposal to build movie theaters downtown. Last month, they were officially selected as the developer of record, which means that we will begin negotiations with them to determine what they will build and what the City will do to assist them. He stated that the negotiations are coming to a conclusion and the redevelopment agreement will be on the council agenda for a public hearing this coming Monday. Mr. McGee noted that one of the things that the city will do is the traditional public components of the project, which include demolition of some of the buildings and construction of some of the streetscape. The City will also assist with the exterior facades of the building through TIF money. He added that we will hire an architect to work with the architect for the developer, Michael Bott. This team will put together a project for your review. Mr. McGee stated that we wanted to mention this to you today to tell you that it will be brought forward, and it will be on a fast track. If things go as planned, the land will be assembled by Aug 1st, and the construction will be underway Oct. 1st.

Mr. McGee stated that the City would like the Urban Design Committee to play a role in advising the City and the team in the design of the project. There are some key things that likely will not change. The entrance will likely be on P street. There will be a drop-off lane in front of the theater. There will be a

large lobby, which will over 1000 sq ft. Total seats will be 2600-2800 seats. The project will be almost exclusively theaters; however, there may be a small game room. The challenges from a design perspective are how to make a building this large fit into downtown Lincoln. There is also a grand entrance and there are basically three blank walls, and we want to keep them from looking like the back of a building.

Mr. McGee stated that is anticipated that there will be a 40% increase initially in terms of theater-goers in the downtown facilities. Three of the four existing Douglas-operated theaters downtown will close. The Starship 9 will remain open.

Mr. Sullivan questioned why there was no O Street entrance. Mr. McGee stated that they wanted to be creative in how to make that frontage workable.

Mr. McGee stated that Douglas Theater was not interested in having other uses in the building. He added that some of the other theaters that will close would be readily accessible to re-use and others, such as the Douglas, are architecturally more challenging.

Mr. McGee noted that one of the things that the City wants this Committee's input on is the facade on the south side on O Street, which looks like an entrance and may be deceiving.

In response to a question regarding the designer, Mr. McGee stated that a Request for Proposals has been issued and are due March 19. There will be a selection committee that will review them and make a recommendation to the Mayor on a firm that would be hired to design the streetscape as well as work with Michael Bott on the exterior design of the building.

Mr. McGee noted that the targeted opening date is a year from this fall. He stated that the ability to use eminent domain is written in to the redevelopment agreement. However, the project could be delayed significantly if the property cannot be acquired quickly.

Mr. McGee stated that he would inform the Committee of the progress made on this project and seek their input at a future meeting.

Traffic Roundabout at Sheridan Blvd. And South 40th Street

Scott Cockrill of Public Works Engineering Services stated that this is a safety project as currently it is a high accident intersection. He noted that there is a volume of approximately 7,700 vehicles traveling on Sheridan Boulevard on a daily basis and approximately 15,000 on 40th Street. The intent of the project is to make a safe intersection out of an unsafe intersection.

Mike Malone stated that they have completed conceptual design. Design should be complete in mid-summer and construction will begin in August.

Steve Garbe stated that the median is the same width as at 33rd & Sheridan. However, 40th street has significantly more traffic than 33rd. He noted that there are two main things that the city wants to look at, which include improving truck circulation and maintaining more consistent speeds in the roundabout. Mr. Garbe stated that the option that they have come up with is to take a small portion into the median on Sheridan Boulevard. By having 2-3 feet coming in, this allows us to create a greater shift on the approach and forces the right-turn traffic to slow down. He stated that they are also looking at widening on the

outbound side 4-6 feet.

Mr. Garbe added that they wanted to look at pedestrian flow based upon observation at 33rd. Standard design would place the crosswalks on every approach 22-25 feet back from the circle. To improve pedestrian spacing, they felt it would improve operations to slide that back, which they have done on three of the four intersections. Consistent with 33rd street, Mr. Garbe noted that they will need temporary easements to construct the project on each corner and they will look to acquire permanent public easements to construct the sidewalks. Lighting will be consistent with 33rd. He stated that there is a bus stop at the northwest quadrant, and StarTran has said that it will not be a problem to relocate it. Mr. Garbe stated that in regard to the line of sight, they do not want extravagant landscaping in the middle. They have strategically positioned four Black Hills spruce trees in the middle.

Gail Gerkenmeyer stated that the design theme was to keep it similar of the original Sheridan Blvd. 33rd and Sheridan has stamped, colored concrete and they carry that same theme at 40th. She stated that Parks and Recreation will maintain the medians and roundabouts and any enhanced landscaping would be done by the neighborhood association. Ms. Gerkenmeyer stated that a few more street trees have been added as well as 15-16 new plants.

Mr. Eckert about the evaluation of stacking and level of service on 40th. Mr. Garbe stated that a traffic analysis had been done and the roundabout will operate at level service C during the PM peak hour, which is an improvement over the existing conditions today. In terms of stacking, there will be significant reductions. The westbound leg may see an increase in stacking, as there is significantly more traffic than 33rd.

Mr. Singh noted that there was some discussion as to whether it makes sense to allow the driver to be able to see across the central island. He stated that they have submitted a request to the Department of Roads for a research project, which was approved. In conjunction with that study, there is also a camera at 33rd and Sheridan in order to see that intersection under operation. Mr. Singh added that there is a national interest in the results of that research, which will be interpreted into some form of design guidelines.

Mr. Cockrill stated that a group of citizens will meet and provide input in this process. A unique feature is that since this is a federally funded safety project, it was not necessary to seek public approval of the project.

Mr. Sullivan stated that with the crosswalk occurring later than you are expecting it to be, and questioned if the driver forget about the pedestrian. Mr. Garbe stated they felt it was still within the confines of the roundabout, as the splitter island design helps define the roundabout.

Mr. Cockrill stated that one of the main improvements over traffic signals is that delay is basically cut off as vehicles are entering and exiting consistently, and there is no stopping. Also, there is less stacking, thereby eliminating emissions in one specific location.

Mr. Sullivan made a motion to approve the design, seconded by Ms. Kissel. Motion for approval carried 6-0. Sullivan, Kissel, Scholz, Eckert, Oforah, Scheer voting 'yes'. Todd absent.

Policy Statement on "Enhanced Streetscapes"

Lynn Johnson stated that they have incorporated the comments from this committee regarding the process for enhanced streetscape and landscape. He added that they have not mapped the areas, but instead identified the types of areas where these would be located. The process would be that staff would bring a recommendation to Urban Design Committee for their review who would then made a recommendation to the City Council. The intent is that the City Council would review the recommendation and adopt a resolution authorizing the enhanced streetscape or landscape and identify the funding for future maintenance. Mr. Johnson stated that they are suggesting that the Council place that money with the Finance Department, because of the way that the budget process works. In response to a question regarding being affordable, Mr. Johnson stated that they are trying to ensure environmental justice.

Mr. Scheer stated that he is comfortable with the language and has given the Urban Design Committee clarity in what their role is.

Mr. Johnson stated that the next step will be talking with Law and determining exactly how this would get adopted.

Ms. Kissel made a motion to approve the draft of the process, seconded by Mr. Sullivan. Motion for approval carried 5-0. Kissel, Sullivan, Eckert, Oforah, and Scheer voting 'yes'. Scholz and Todd absent.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Zimmer informed the committee that Antelope Valley is active with urban design proposals from the RTKL consulting firm. City staff is trying to work through the designs. RTKL will come back with further proposals in April or May. Ms. Kissel asked if a market analysis had been done. Mr. Zimmer replied that a market analysis was done and goes out 10 years, but the proposal goes out 20 years.

There being no further business, Mr. Scheer adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.